

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-19 (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A method of reducing a draft effect of a flue duct upon an upstream exhaust gas cleaning system, including the steps of:

extending a downwardly open first flue duct, having a second flue duct disposed thereon for connection to an upstream exhaust gas cleaning system, into a vat so as, with the aid of a liquid that has collected in the vat, to form a liquid barrier that is adapted to close off a flue gas end of said first flue duct relative to the environment;

relieving the upstream exhaust gas cleaning system from the draft effect of the first flue duct by lowering the level of the liquid in the vat below an edge of the first flue duct to expose at least a portion of a cross-section of the first flue duct.

21. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 20, wherein lowering of the level of the liquid in the vat is effected by lowering the vat together with the liquid.

22. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 21, which includes using a trough as the vat, wherein the trough is associated with a lower edge of said flue draft, and wherein the trough outwardly delimits a discharge plate.

23. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 22, wherein the liquid is adapted to flow over an outer wall of the trough in the manner of a weir.

24. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein a plurality of overflow weirs are associated with various peripheral regions of said trough, and wherein the liquid in the trough is adapted to overflow outwardly via said overflow weirs and to drain the trough.

25. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 22, which includes adjusting a depth of immersion of said first flue duct into the trough by vertically positioning the trough.

26. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 22, which includes re-establishing a chimney draft in the exhaust gas cleaning system by vertically delivering the trough and the discharge plate to the lower end of the first flue duct to such an extent that the first flue duct extends into the liquid of the trough to a predescribed depth.

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, which includes adjusting the depth of immersion by varying the vertical feed of the trough.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 22, which includes applying this method with an open exhaust gas cleaning system.

29. (Currently Amended) An arrangement for reducing the draft effect of a flue duct upon an upstream exhaust gas cleaning system, comprising:

a vat in which liquid is to be collected, wherein a downwardly open first flue duct, having a second flue duct disposed thereon for connection to an upstream exhaust gas cleaning system,

is adapted to be immersed in liquid collected in said vat to form a liquid barrier that is adapted to close off a flue gas end of said first flue duct relative to the environment; and

means for lowering the level of the liquid in said vat below an edge of said first flue duct to thereby expose at least a portion of a cross-section of said first flue duct in order to relieve the upstream exhaust gas cleaning system from the draft effect of the first flue duct.

30. (Currently Amended) An arrangement according to claim 29, wherein said vat is adapted to be vertically lowered relative to said first flue duct by means of said means for lowering the level of the liquid.

31. (Previously Presented) An arrangement according to claim 30, wherein said vat is embodied as a trough that is connected in a gas tight manner with a downwardly inclined discharge plate to form an assembly.

32. (Previously Presented) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein said discharge plate that is connected with said liquid-conveying trough has a pyramidal, conical or spherical configuration and provides for a discharge of the liquid into said trough, and wherein such discharge is distributed over a periphery of said trough.

33. (Currently Amended) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein said discharge plate assembly is supported on said first flue duct by means of a support apparatus, the length of which is adapted to be varied.

34. (Previously Presented) An arrangement according to claim 33, wherein said support apparatus is provided with a plurality of lifting mechanisms distributed over a periphery of said trough.

35. (Currently Amended) An arrangement according to claim 33, wherein said discharge plate assembly is secured to said first flue duct via length-variable tie rods in such a way as to ensure a closure of said flue gas end of said first flue duct relative to the environment.

36. (Previously Presented) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein a plurality of overflow weirs having a uniform height are distributed over a periphery of said trough.

37. (Previously Presented) An arrangement according to claim 36, wherein liquid discharge means are provided downstream of said overflow weirs.

38. (Currently Amended) An arrangement according to claim 31, wherein openings for chimney draft air are provided in said first flue duct, and wherein said openings are adapted to the closed off via air supply shutters or louvers and/or by sliding doors.